

Message Text

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17

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MILL, TU, UR

SUBJ: PRESS REPORTS ON MONTREUX CONVENTION AND TRANSIT OF
AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

1. SEVERAL TURKISH NEWSPAPERS ON JANUARY 8 GAVE PROMINENT
PLAY TO A TURKISH NEWSAGENCY (ANKA) STORY THAT TURKEY
REJECTS WESTERN CLAIMS THAT MONTREUX CONVENTION
PROHIBITS STRAITS TRANSIT BY SOVIET AIRCRAFT CARRIERS.
ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS, ANKA STORY IS BASED ON
EUROPENA PRESS REPORTS AND NATO PUBLICATIONS THAT ACCUSE
TURKEY "OF BEING SOLD TO THE SOVIETS" IN CONNECTION WITH
POSSIBLE TRANSIT OF CARRIERS.

2. REFERRING TO STATEMENTS BY UN-NAMED TURKISH OFFICIALS
AND EXPERTS, PRESS NOTES THAT ARTICLE 15 OF MONTREUX
CONVENTION EXPLICITLY BANS AIRCRAFT CARRIERS BUT THAT IT
CAN BE INTERPRETED AS ALLOWING PASSAGE OF WARSHIPS
CARRYING AIRCRAFT. QUESTION OF WHETHER SOVIET SHIPS
ARE AIRCRAFT CARRIERS IS A TECHNICAL ONE, AND SHIP'S
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QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS MUST BE CAREFULLY EXAMINED

BEFORE A JUDGMENT CAN BE MADE. THAT S SHIP HAS A
"RUNWAY" DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY CLASSIFY IT AS AN
AIRCRAFT CARRIER. TURKISH OFFICIALS AND EXPERTS
REPORTEDLY SAID THAT SOVIET SHIPS IN QUESTION ARE NOT
TRULY AIRCRAFT CARRIERS AND THAT THEY CAN PASS THROUGHT
THE STRAITS. THEY ALSO NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT TURKEY
WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE PROBLEMS IF THE MONTREUX QUESTION
WERE TO FLARE UP AGAIN.
MACOMBER

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